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OUTGOING MESSAGE

Approved For Release 2005/06/09 : CIA-RDP78S01932A000100220085-1

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ITEM NO: BR-4

DATE 22 MAR 74

SUBJECT: PERU--PRESIDENT VELASCO CRITICIZES SOVIET BLOC ASSISTANCE

ACCORDING TO THE PERUVIAN NAVY MINISTER, PRESIDENT VELASCO RECENTLY EXPRESSED A SENSE OF DISENCHANTMENT WITH SOVIET BLOC EFFORTS TO ASSIST PERU. VELASCO REPORTEDLY ALSO INDICATED THAT CONCERN OVER COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN THE PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT.

IT IS NOT UNLIKELY THAT PRESIDENT VELASCO DID IN FACT EXPRESS THESE CONCERNS. PERUVIAN LEADERS, INCLUDING VELASCO, HOWEVER, HAVE BEEN CRITICAL OF THE SOVIET UNION IN THE PAST, PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF THAT COUNTRY'S SLOWNESS IN FOLLOWING THROUGH ON PROMISES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. VELASCO'S COMMENTS PROBABLY WERE DIRECTED AT THIS ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE EFFORT AND NOT AT THE SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE IN PERU WHICH CONSISTS OF SOME 15 SOVIETS WHO ARE INSTRUCTING THE PERUVIANS IN THE USE OF APPROXIMATELY 35 TSS

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State Department review completed

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TANKS THAT RECENTLY ARRIVED IN THE COUNTRY.

VELASCO'S REPORTED CONCERN OVER COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT ALSO IS A REITERATION OF A CONTINUING PROBLEM FOR THE PRESIDENT, WHO HAS TAKEN PAINS TO SEE THAT COMMUNIST ELEMENTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO BECOME ESTABLISHED IN POSITIONS OF POWER. VELASCO MAY FEEL THAT TOO MANY COMMUNIST SYMPATHIZERS WERE ALLOWED TO INFILTRATE THE REGIME'S MASS MOBILIZATION AGENCY UNDER THE PREVIOUS HEAD OF THE OFFICE, WHO WAS ONE OF THE MORE RADICAL GENERALS. SOME MODERATE HOUSECLEANING MAY THEREFORE BE UNDER WAY. VELASCO MAY ALSO BE CONCERNED WITH REPLACING CERTAIN OF THESE LEFTIST INDIVIDUALS WITH PERSONS MORE LOYAL TO HIMSELF.

PRESIDENT VELASCO'S REPORTED VIEWS BREAK NO NEW GROUND, BUT DO INDICATE THAT THE REGIME CONTINUES TO VIEW REALISTICALLY ITS RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET BLOC AND THAT IT REMAINS SENSITIVE ABOUT ITS POSITION AS SOUTH AMERICA'S MOST RADICAL COUNTRY.

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